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HENRY ST CLAIR,

A TALE OF THE PERSECUTION IN SCOTLAND;

AND

THE MARTYR OF FREEDOM.



WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH;

AND T. CADELL, LONDON.

MDCCCXXXIII.

208.

PRINTED BY NEILL & CO.
OLD FISHMARKET, EDINBURGH.

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TO

THE DESCENDANTS OF THOSE CHRISTIAN HEROES
WHO SUFFERED DEATH OR PERSECUTION UN-
DER THE RESTORED HOUSE OF STUART, FOR
THE CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY OF SCOT-
LAND, THIS POEM IS RESPECTULLY

DEDICATED.

CANTO I.

THE COVENANTERS.

I.

THE rushing dawn ascends the sky,
And, in the purpling canopy
Star, after waning star, decays,
Dissolved before the coming blaze.
The earth is fresh ; the air serene,
From bluest ether to the green
Of ocean, waits the genial flame
Of Day, to fill its balmy frame.
White wreaths of mist the dells exhale
Which cap the cliffs, or slowly sail
Aloft, till every floating fold
Is woven with transparent gold,

Or bears upon its blushing snows,
The tenderest tint of either rose.

II.

A thousand deer forsake the lair,
And o'er the bending heather spring ;
A thousand birds are in the air,
And warble on the balanced wing.
Wheeling above the limpid stream,
An insect host, with busy gleam,
Provoke the lively trout to rise,
And, leaping, snap his puny prize,
So frequent, that the sportive wave,
A thousand spreading rings engrave,
Where bank and bush, from line to line,
In undulous reflection shine.
Refreshed by sweet and deep repose
All Nature's living tribes disclose,
In gambols rude, or carolled song,
Their matin mirth, which teems along
The plains of ether, earth and sea :
Swelling His praise, unconsciously,
Who called them out of nought, and gave

The blooming ground, the rolling wave,
The liquid air, the light divine,
For them to spread, for them to shine.
He nerved each sense for new delight,
And braced their speed, or plumed their flight,
With bounding heart, and sparkling eye,
To scour the field, or cleave the sky.

III.

But hark, from a sequestered dell,
What solemn peal ascends on high,
Now loud the notes in rapture swell,
And now in holy murmurs die !
Softly along the winding dale
The melting echoes slowly sail ;
Yet far above all other sound
Which joyous creatures pour around,
That voice is heard, aye, heard before
The throne it riseth to adore !
Gloweth with power that pious strain,
To breathe all bliss, to soothe all pain,
And shoot a sunbeam through the gloom,
Which veils the portal of the tomb.

Lo ! there be Martyrs in the throng,
Who lift their sweet ecstatic song
Of thanks, of triumph, and of praise,
The Royal Minstrel's sacred lays,
And feel their spirit, touched with fire,
A loftier, purer flight aspire,
As though the word their lips proclaim,
Could win them upward whence it came.
All other sound, how dull, how dim,
Beside the high, adoring hymn !
The cloud-born thunders, as they roll,
Strike but the sense—this melts the soul.
Its glorious hallelujahs fill
With dearest awe the breast they thrill ;
And, searching through its inmost part,
Awake, refine, renew the heart ;
Shake down the holds of vice and sin,
And pour victorious truth within ;
As fell, of old the leaguered wall,
Before the Hebrew's trumpet-call,
And crumbled to his sheathed sword—
For the breath of that trump was the breath of
the Lord !

IV.

Midway within a heathy vale
Whose dewy flowers the sunrise hail,
A mountain-ash his ray receives,
And winnows through its slender leaves,
And woos, with ripening glow, to shoot
The crimson through its clustered fruit.
Beside its long-drawn shadow, lies
A single crag of massy size,
With grey and yellow moss o'ergrown
Of yore from some far summit thrown,
And bearing still a hoary scar,
From antient elemental war.
Before its base, with heaven-ward hands,
In prayer, a Christian Pastor stands,
Among his small and suffering flock,
Sons of the desert and the rock,
Condemned, pursued, even for the Faith,
But true, beyond the fear of death.
From wild to wild, proscribed they roam,
A native land without a home ;
O'erhead they have no canopy,
Save the blue arches of the sky,

Or some lone cave, or sheltering tree,
Against the storm's inclemency.
No pitying friend, no generous foe,
Relieves their want, or soothes their woe ;
Who hears a fainting brother's prayer,
His guilt hath shared, his doom must share !
With faltering step, where'er they stray,
Famine and bloodshed taint the way :
But He, whose voice the rock unsealed,
And, in its barren breast revealed
A living fountain's gushing tide,
For these poor wanderers can provide,
Illume with joy their loneliest bowers,
And strew their wilderness with flowers.

V.

The Pastor stands, with pallid cheek,
Fair, lofty brow, and locks of snow,
And eyes, whose light is warm, yet meek
With supplication's fervent glow.
Beneath his feet, the heather-bell
Blooms on a turf of gentle swell ;
Before him, on the sloping ground,

Youth, age, and childhood, pray around
In groups which leave the checkered green
Bright in the morning ray between.
There bends a Mother o'er her boy,
Still spared, her last and lonely joy:
Strained to her bosom o'er and o'er,
He hears her plaintive voice implore
A Father in yon happy skies,
Where want or cold can never rise;
And softly breathes the infant-prayer,
That, with his mother, he were there!
For, earthly sire no more hath he
Whose love may shield his infancy;
But oft, half-conscious, sobs to hear,
Her widowed moan, when none are near,
For him, the good, the kind, the brave,
Who fills a martyr's bloody grave.
Then, with a gaze, whose troubled light
Betrays a gleam too wildly bright,
As if sharp grief, and fear and pain,
Of reason had relaxed the rein—
With long insatiate gaze, she woos
The bliss she could not live and lose,

And clasping him in close embrace,
Devours the promise of his face,
His father's image there to trace,
While soothing Hope matures her son,
In charms from mournful Memory won.
But her glazed eye the tear congeals
Until the child its fount unseals,
When, looking up, he twines his arm
Around her neck in fond alarm,
And strives, by every simple wile,
Again to make his mother smile,
And whispers—from yon narrow bourne
His lingering sire shall yet return !
Twin mourners ! still there cares for you
A Father and a Husband too,
Whose mercy more than balm can lend,
If e'er a chastening grief he send ;
Who leads, even now, your wandering way,
The widow's shield, the orphan's stay ;
His arm, whose manna spread the wild,
Is round that parent and her child.

VI.

Near these, an aged man is kneeling,
O'er his breast a rapture stealing,
Where, awhile forgot remain
Days of blood, and years of pain.
As the last column of some pile,
Deserted, rears its head awhile,
Yet, nodding, seems to woo the ground,
Where rest its kindred ruins round,
And wins the piteous gaze of all,
Stedfast so long, so soon to fall ;
Even thus, that man of eld and care,
Whose hand is frail, and whose temples show
A furrow for every tress of hair
Which sheds its silver o'er his brow.
But though his form be weak to view,
His spirit, unbroken, shines brightly through ;
And the years that have worn him, limb and frame,
Have left his keen grey eye the same.
In happier days, he wooed and wed ;
A hardy offspring blest his bed,
And oft, when they with smiling glee,
Gambolled, or climbed upon his knee,

Or hid their faces in his dress,
And, peeping, lured a new caress,
His rapture owned, with sweet alloy,
The heart's kind dew, the tear of joy.
That eye may ne'er again be filled
With drops by happiness distilled ;
Nor grief can give that heart, so sere,
The freshness of a falling tear.
One glossy-haired and dark-eyed youth,
With glance of fire, and front of truth,
Spontaneously which homage won,
At home had been his favourite son,
Unenvied, for his generous heart
Nor felt distrust, nor could impart.
He was his doating mother's pride,
Who kept him by her partial side
Whene'er she sped, to feast, or fair,
Where meeting dames their sons compare,
And, blessed by nature's biassed tone,
For something still prefer their own.
He, seized beside a lonely brake,
With others met for worship sake,
So young, was spared their sharper doom,

Spared for the captive's living tomb.
His bonds he burst ; one hour of which,
Sufficed his ardent breast to teach
Better than could whole years of speech,
How true men, from a tyrant's scourge
To free their country, fiercely forge
Their broken fetters to a brand,
The sharpest in a warrior's hand !

VII.

Too few the daring band he led,
Too soon their precious blood was shed.
Wounded, pursued, at eve his moan
Was heard, beside the chilly stone
Which marked his parent's cottage door,
Where oft his childhood played before.
For shelter, and for life, he cried ;
One night, one hour, his head to hide,
Till the assassins lose their trace !
Even thus, his mother paused a space,
For, if she aid his dying need,
The law is written—both shall bleed !
Men urge affection's ties in vain,

What need they bonds ? the despot's chain !
Enough, within the wretched clime,
Where virtue is the unforgiven crime !

VIII.

Tyrants ! ye may with hateful power
The limb dissect, the life devour ;
But, with the hand of God, unsealing
The fountain of maternal feeling,
Can *your* word repress emotion,
Mighty as the surging ocean,
And whose tide that arm impels,
Which the earthquake heaves or quells ?
No ! ye torture for a time,
And earn the curse of fruitless crime ;
Ye ply the axe, ye lock the chain,
Rack, slay, grow monsters — but in vain !

IX.

Her son's faint prayers the parent move,
And terror bends to stronger love.
She hides him, and, with trembling haste,
Her skill forgot, her toil misplaced,

Begins to ply her housewife lore,
When, hark, the foemen shake the door.
She strives to turn their search aside ;
But, hard her task the truth to hide,
For what her faltering lips deny,
Her livid cheek, her glaring eye,
The labour of her breast bely !
The soldiers, trained to such a quest,
Drag forth her son, and bare his breast,
Sustain her, bind her to the spot—
Her tingling ears the deadly shot
Scarce heard, across her giddy sight
Scarce flashed the dazzling blast of light,
That stretched her darling child on earth,
When, on her sacred household hearth,
Yet reeking with her kindred blood,
They slew the matron where she stood !

X.

The old man knew not for a time
These horrors : his, the patriot's crime,
A vile usurper to disown,
Whose guilt had forfeited the throne.

Though gold the forehead might surround,
He deemed not thus a Traitor crowned ;
Apart from *trust*, the yellow ring
Might deck the man, but not the King,
Whose symbol wore no sacred sign,
More than the mass within the mine,
When he, whose brows the bauble bare,
Belied the faith which placed it there.
Old MALCOLM, outlawed, on the wild,
For whom a home but rarely smiled,
Knew not for three long days the doom
Which turned his dwelling to a tomb :
Three days — what anguish breathed his sigh,
That then he had been blest to die !
His stubborn heart that hour of pain
Survived, but ne'er beat light again.
One by one, his children brave
Have passed before him to the grave ;
His friends of early youth are gone,
He lingers late on earth alone,
And longs to be a silent guest,
Where the weary are at rest.
Yet to his soul a stay is given ;

Though wife and children are bereft,
A charm of stedfast power is left,
Conscience—approving heaven!
It was the bravest Pagan's boast,
When human joys and hopes were lost,
With ruthless hand his woes to hide
In the red shroud of suicide,
Nor more with being's misery strive—
The greater Christian dares to live!
Not unrewarded. On that head
A holy peace is richly shed,
Above the sward his knees are bending,
And upon that heaving breast,
His folded hands are lightly pressed,
Whilst his spirit seems attending,
As to strains that come from far
With unearthly fleetness,
Whence no mortal discords mar
Their surpassing sweetness:
So soft, so rich, their melody,
That laps his soul to rest,
He fondly deems, ah, can they be
An echo from the blessed?

Absorbed in rapture, as he prays
Heaven opens on his mental gaze ;
Unfilmed, his glance ascends on high,
Amid the tenants of the sky ;
Again his wife, his children sees,
And joys foretasting all their peace.

XI.

Too soon, that fond ecstatic view,
Fades like the sunset's glowing hue :
The vision of celestial day
Fleets from returning sense away,
And, in the evening of his years,
That Pilgrim of a vale of tears,
Awaits, with lowly mind, whate'er
His lot shall be, to bless and bear,
Till summoned from this frail abode,
To join his kindred and his God.

XII.

The solemn congregation rise,
And their last prayer ascends the skies ;
Then each explores the lonely way

To his retreat. But who be they,
Twin Worshippers, the young, the fair,
Who came, and knelt together there,
And now, retiring side by side,
Along yon mountain's bosom glide,
Their mazy path pursued by none,
Except old MALCOLM's steps alone?
No heart untouched in all the throng,
Regards them as they move along,
But seems to say, such toil or woe,
Shadows their footsteps as they go,
That each, to whom their fate is known,
In it forgets awhile his own.

Their tale recalls a matchless time,
Of Scotia's glory, grief, and crime.

END OF CANTO I.

CANTO II.

THE CAVE.

CURBING a mountain stream that hides
From dell to dell its mazy tides,
A cliff sustains a roofless tower,
The seat of old baronial power.
Dark are the massive walls, and bare,
Where fire and sword have driven the share
Of havoc never veiled by years.
No softening touch of Time appears,
That melancholy charm to lend,
Wherein decay and beauty blend,
Awaking in the breast a strain
Of tender joy and pleasing pain,
As we recall the vanished scene

Where man and all his joys have been,
And gazing on the wreck, we see
What man and all his joys shall be.
No ivy its mantle of foliage hath cast
Round the age of that ruin to temper the blast,
No crest of green fern from the battlement
waves,
No flower-bearing crevice the fabric engraves ;
But one raw chasm, the solemn blue
Comes gleaming desolately through ;
And bleak the wall, and scathed the rent,
Though spoiled and spoiler so long are spent,
That in the hearth-place you may see
The stem of a tall and goodly tree,
Whose branches, through the casement thrown,
Fret in the breeze, its arch of stone.

II.

The peasants still the tale admire,
When winter crowds their evening fire,
How, in the days when bigot zeal
Had dyed the STUART'S gory steel—
STUART, from exile raised, caressed,

To stab his country's trusting breast—
In civil war the tyrant's power
The Baron slew and sacked the tower,
Yet failed of half its fatal aim,
Two souls escaped the steel and flame.

III.

All-giving, all-requiring Time !
Athwart thy store of good and crime
Revert thy rapid flight awhile ;
Thy greedy urn I would beguile,
From some high hearts the pall remove,
And bid them live again and love.
Thy hest all mortal things obey,
Yet Memory can reclaim thy prey,
And vivid bloom around it cast,
As though thy pinion were not past.
Then give us back, in brief exchange,
A few short hours thou hast o'erflown ;
Ere long thou shalt have full revenge
On us and all we call our own.

IV.

Shielding the castle-cliff, an oak
Deep rooted in the rifted rock,
Of yore, with many a gnarled bough,
Umbrageous then, though dwindled now,
A pathway's slender traces veiled,
And half the grot whose porch they scaled.

V.

Deep in the cave, where faintly fell
The ray that pierced the shaded cell,
There is a form, whose robes of white
Amid the gloom are snowy bright,
A gentle form, of nurture mild,
The floweret of a rocky wild.
Chill is the breath of morning air,
Which, as it listeth, enters there ;
Flinty to press, and rude to see,
The floor beneath the Lady's knee ;
But she that stone nor feels, nor sees,
Nor heeds the searching mountain-breeze,
Although it stirs each waving fold
Of her long locks of yellow gold.

For succour, MARY kneels to pray,
And all her soul is far away.

VI.

Across the porch, in slumber light,
Old MALCOLM who had waked the night,
Reposes, but with half-sealed eyes,
Alert to guard against surprise.
Beside his feet a hound is laid,
Which often, noiseless, lifts its head
With wistful gaze upon his face,
The earliest pause of sleep to trace,
And fawn on him, in friendly sport
The morning's first caress to court.
The trusty hound, though void of speech,
Some, clad with nobler forms, might teach
How far false heart, and phrase, and suit,
Degrade the man beneath the brute.
True in all chance, whate'er betide,
Constant as shadow by the side,
The faithful dog, all friends, all foes,
Knoweth but as his master knows,
And prodigally brave, lays down

His life in combats not his own.
Eager to watch the eye or hand,
That service may prevent command ;
Delighted if a smile approve,
And lavish of his grateful love,
Such truth and heart his zeal commend,
As raise the dumb slave to the friend.

VII.

Sudden the hound springs up, his ears
Erect, and harks, and disappears,
But soon returns with lively bound,
Retreating oft, or wheeling round
A youth, who heeds him not the while,
Nor pays his courtship with a smile,
But doffs a plaid all dank with dew,
A hunting-spear and bonnet blue,
And springs by MARY's side to kneel
In fear, which love alone can feel.

VIII.

" HENRY ! so soon returned ? And why
That fiery step and flashing eye ?

'Tis scarce an hour that thou art gone."
" My MARY ! yet awhile mine own !
Aye mine, who may no more be blest
To ward thy danger with my breast.
Our foes draw nigh. The rising ray
No sooner swept the mists away,
Than, in the vale, I marked the glance
Where helm on helm their files advance ;
And since they shed my father's gore,
Not unavenged, although I bore
My young bride fainting through the strife,
Their thirsty steel pursues my life.
Alas, that all thy hopes should twine
Around a fate so lost as mine !
O if *one* slaughter might suffice,
I could provoke the sacrifice,
And, though my doom were sharp and sure,
Smile at *thy* safety and endure—"
" HENRY !—no more"—with frantic clasp
She strained him in her breathless grasp,
As though in shipwreck this could save
One plank between her and the grave.
" Ungenerously kind ! Could I

For single, selfish rescue, sigh ?
Deem'st thou this heart so tame, so poor ?
HENRY ! *thou* shouldst have known it more :
“ Forgive me, love ! The wish forgive,
That one so mild as thou, might live
Beyond the fast expiring space
Which bounds with blood my mortal race.
But thee, even ruthless foes might spare—”
“ Now, if thou hatest me not, forbear !
Both orphans—outlawed—welcome Fate,
So thou be with me, and my mate !
O had I now the fairest choice
Of life, long life, and friends, and joys,
Apart from thee—I could but crave
Thy lot, were thine this hour the grave !
Think'st thou my widowed eye could brook
The lonely light which thine forsook ?
Or would this bosom vainly beat,
No answering throb from thine to meet ?
In mercy never ! Left alone,
All use and end and aim are gone,
No ! though the shaft of death should cleave thee,
I cannot, and I will not leave thee !”

IX.

On her flushing neck she felt
His eyes their warmest treasure melt,
And accents murmured o'er her, caught
The breathings from a soul o'erfraught.
" Selfish ! to blend my life of broil
With her's, too frail for blood or toil !
Still selfish ! Though this clasp should kill,
These arms, so rebel to my will,
As lightly could this cave remove,
As loose their hold from her I love !"
" And were my fate in that caress
I could not bid thee cling the less !
Thou gone—more fearful than to die,
These spoilers and their infamy !
Nay, start nor seize with frenzied hand,
Thy strong but unredeeming brand :
My poniard surer aid affords,
And mocks all menace, save their swords !
But hark, the murderers seek the prey !—"
Listening, upon his breast she lay
And searched his eye, with eyes of blue,

Where all her soul seemed pouring through,
To steal the keen delicious pain
Of those who ne'er may look again,
When sense and spirit pant to prove
The thrilling gaze of farewell love,
And each brief moment flitting past,
Grows dear and dearer till the last.

X.

While thus her glance explores his face,
Yet closer clings her wild embrace,
At every murmur from the foe,
Upon their bloody quest who go.
Above, beneath, is heard the rout
Of men along the dell who shout,
And doom with oath-empoisoned breath,
ST CLAIR to die a traitor's death.
Silent as the sealed grave,
Hush the inmates of the cave,
Till no living sound is heard,
Accent breathed, or limb bestirred,
But fixed and rooted all are grown,
As they were frozen into stone.

While thus they listen, slow the sob
Grows audible in each deep throb
Of MARY's bosom, as her ear
Thrills with agony to hear
A soldier's foot-fall, beat by beat,
Near the porch of their retreat !
But HE, with whom all issues bide,
In mercy turned the steps aside.

XI.

At length the weary search is o'er ;
The soldiers probe the dell no more,
The clangor of retiring foes
Wanes into silence and repose,
And only then from MARY's eye,
 Slow springs the pearly tear ;
The fountain of her heart was dry,
 While death yet hovered near ;
But the returning sense and touch
Of earth, and life, and hope, too much
Her gentle nature strained, that stood
Resolved in all extreme of blood,

Yet fell relaxed when ceased alarms,
She swooned within her husband's arms.

END OF CANTO II.

CANTO III.

THE COMBAT.

ASSAILED, o'erwhelmed, but unsubdued,
The Pious, driven to solitude,
Rejoiced in silent life apart,
To write the Word upon his heart,
Each dangerous day, or wakeful night,
His solace and severe delight.
And who may tell what commerce high,
The mortal mingled with the sky,
Or, while his pilgrim path he trod,
How near that intercourse with God,
Which, o'er his breast a radiance shed,
Divine, as touched the Prophet's head,
When, on the Mount, the thunder-cloud

Robed him within its flashing shroud,
Who, singly with JEHOVAH spake,
Whilst heaven was bowed, and earth did quake !
So when the suffering Martyr knelt
Upon the wild, and, chastened, felt
How life's illusions wane away
When grief refines the grosser clay,
A halo round his spirit shone,
Conversing with the Lord alone !

II.

It is the high and holy Day.
HENRY and MARY take their way
To join the persecuted men
Who, from their fastness, cave, or glen,
Advance to meet at morning tide,
And worship on the mountain side.
A rite of danger ; for they stake
Their forfeit lives for conscience sake,
And carry—strangely blended gear—
The Bible with the gun or spear.
There is an ash, whose loftiest bough
The level ray illumines now

Beside a grey crag, not yet shewn
Blood-baptized as the Martyr's Stone.
The Sun-rise was the hour agreed
To congregate upon the mead ;
For, nought these outlaws of the wold,
 Of Time's revolving progress know,
Save what they learn, as they behold
 His footstep round creation go.
No art have they, and no device
To measure moments as he flies ;
Alike their days, and months, and years,
They number as they scan the spheres.
By the bright sun they tell the hour,
Reading his height, or shade, or power ;
Upon the pale moon's argent shield,
Or in the sparkling, starry field,
Where marshalled worlds pursue their flight,
The outlaws mete the wondrous night.
Thus day to day doth utter speech,
And night to night high knowledge teach,
Until their tutored thoughts ascend
Where rise no suns, no seasons end ;

Beyond all earth and earthly hest,
Beyond the worm's sepulchral breast,
To realms all light and truth they soar,
Where pain, hate, time, and death are o'er.

III.

Upon ST CLAIR the steps attend
Of an approved and aged friend,
His servant MALCOLM : one, among
That noble peasantry, so long
The shield of Scotia's faith ; her boast
Who shall be, till that faith be lost.
In habit simple, rude, austere ;
Pious of spirit, firm, sincere ;
They loved that Law, whose equal scale
No treacherous bias could assail,
Though weighed the sword and sceptre too,
With one poor peasant's bonnet blue.
And Peace they loved, as love the free
Who deem her next to Liberty.
But they had been bred in the Virgin Land
Of the fearless heart and the fetterless hand,

And firm as her mountains, and fierce as her waves,
To a tyrant they yielded no throne but their
 graves !

IV.

The outlawed wanderers slowly meet ;
With kind but sober joy they greet,
And, as beseems the Sabbath, bear
A reverend, more than mournful, air,
Bespeaking hallowed inward thought,
Whence their grave forms, words, looks, have
 caught
A chastened dignity. Grown wise
By care and grief, the vanities
Of earth they know, and known, despise.

V.

Awhile they wait, but wait in vain
For those who ne'er shall come again,
A father and his child, whose vow
Was ever blent with theirs till now.
But when the sun's increasing power
Had drained the dewcup of the flower,

They pause not ; it were long delay
Till chains or death resigned their prey.
Foreboding hearts no herald need
Their absent brethren's fate to read,
Or bid them now, as lost, deplore
The quarry of the hunted moor.
The Human Quarry ! Scotia, hear !
Their murder groans *have* thrilled thine ear,
And may yon hills, thy haughty crest,
Sink in waste sands upon thy breast,
Yon lakes, thy mirrors blue and deep,
Grow fens where sun nor star shall sleep,
If thou forget the good and free,
The sons who nobly died for thee !

VI.

First on the heath, the hymn of praise
From hallowed lips the circle raise ;
The hymn, by royal David given—
The hallowed lip, the harp of heaven !
The song is hushed : upon the sod
Erect they seek the throne of God ;
Men, women, children, mingle there,

And pour their spirits into prayer,
For unto Him, whom thus they greet,
An infant's feeblest voice is sweet.
Aught else is mute, save through the sky,
By fits the curlew's wailing cry,
Or from the flowers, the murmuring
Of bees that round a fountain sing,
When hark, that peal! The warning gun,
Fired, ere half the prayer was done,
By scouts who watched the plain below
And fleeing, shout, The foe—the foe!

VII.

O but it were a gallant sight
For heartless men to see,
The glancing of their helmets bright,
The soldiers in the golden light
Rode up so merrily!
But a knell was in the swordless sheath
That clanked as the steeds came on
The very bridle-clang spoke death,
Its music ringing o'er the heath
All round the Martyr's Stone.

And onward, and onward, they bounded amain,
And their snow-white plumes were brave,
As they floated and fell, and floated again,
Like the foam on a surging wave.

VIII.

No shriek was heard. ST CLAIR'S right hand
Already waved the naked brand,
And eagerly the throng regard,
In peril, his commanding word.
" Our armed men, beside this rock,
Awhile may check the soldiers' shock,
And gain, for those more loved than life,
A moment's space to flee from strife."
Then, as their wives and children fly,
Thus to the few who wait to die :
" Dear brethren of my dangers past !
One pang, the sharpest but the last—
One hour of glorious thought and deed,
And then the patriot-martyr's meed !
Farewell, sweet land that gave me birth,
My widowed love, my homeless hearth ;


But by my father's gory grave,
Let us revenge, who cannot save!
Our country groans in shame and wrong
Till every rock hath found a tongue,
And her grey hills, with crimsoned flood,
Loud to the heavens, cry Blood for blood!
High Heaven hath heard!—Our country's cry,
Our swords shall answer as we die!
And O, when thus in ire we fall,
May He forgive who knoweth all,
And grant the martyr's name to bloom
Eternal as his mountain-tomb,
Towering, when storms around are hurled,
The bulwark of a Christian world!
O may the martyr's stock send forth
A happier race, of equal worth,
Like us, devoted to the faith,
But unpursued like us to death!
Hark, how near yon leader's word,
Above the rapid charge is heard;
Couch, and till my sign require,
Fire not, though the soldiers fire."

IX.

They lie behind a mound of heath,
And, in the flowers, their carbines sheathe.
Before the crag, a narrow pass
Attains them through a small morass,
And, when the soldiers win their way
Where its farther entrance lay,
Though they scoffed the peasant crew,
And shot, where'er a movement shewed
A naked arm or bonnet blue,
Yet they shun the dangerous road
Which issues in a foeman's lair
Inflamed with zeal, revenge, despair.
Thus baffled, each his comrade taunts
To lead and storm the rebel haunts,
While faster than his pistols rung,
Come curses from his burning tongue.

X.

Not such the mood severely great,
Wherewith the Persecuted wait
The challenge of the foe.



Hushed, on the soil, they sank, the brave,
Soft as the snow-flakes on the wave,
Which rest a moment on their grave,
Then melt in ocean's flow.

They know that soon the swelling heath
May be to them the couch of death,
When dust to dust, the mountain-breast
Shall fold her slumbering war-worn guest.
Yet few their terrors of the tomb,
Few as may be to men whose doom,
A bloody death seems near ;
They fear His name, whose outstretched arm
Is strong to shield the soul from harm,

Repressing meaner fear.
And when the sharp shot smartly ring,
Perchance some fingers faster cling
Around an old and trusty blade
Where once a father's hand was laid,
And vows the son to flash, that day,
Through battle-smoke its ancient ray.
Then thrills his arm to press and feel
The temper of the quivering steel,
How springs it to the bend ;

And he gripes it strongly in his grasp,
As one may hold, with a farewell clasp,
The hand of a faithful friend !
But when he hears the accursed vows,
Which raging foemen swear,
He pulls the bonnet o'er his brows,
And answers with a prayer !

XI.

At length two soldiers stung by gibes,
Or lured perchance by golden bribes,
In rivalry from horseback sprung,
And cheering led the way :
From every hand the reins are flung,
They rush upon their prey.
Then fired ST CLAIR his signal gun,
And the pause of death was done.
The first goes down ; from secret aims,
The heather flashed with deadly flames ;
Three swordsmen fall no more to rise,
And more than one assailant flies,
But brief their check, the scanty store
Of death-dispersing grain,

Which in their flasks the peasants bore,
Is vanishing amain.
Away the harquebuss they fling
And to the trusty broad-sword spring.

XII

Now in stern but silent rage
Man to man, the lines engage;
In so mortal hate they burn
Few the blows that brook return;
With breath repressed to stab or hew,
Where they wounded there they slew.
Foot to foot, and hand to hand,
Fiercely-challenged eye to eye,
Breast to breast, and brand to brand,
Enemy to enemy,
They grapple in that savage mood
Where safety bends to thirst of blood!
Then horrid was the shrilly clang
As steel on steel the sabres rang,
But baleful was their duller tone
When cleaving through the hollow bone
And echoed by a dying moan.

The victim, reeling to his knees,
 With one hand knits the welling gash,
And upward writhes his foe to seize
With madness in his energies,
 Till prone, in gore, his bosom plash ;
And his fingers are frightfully cast abroad
As he clutches them full of the oozing sod ;
And he grindeth the dust, and in blind despair
Rends from the scalp his matted hair,
And shrieks for mercy—in vain, in vain—
The steel goes through him once again !
Then ceased the heath below to quake,
Then ceased his heart to beat or break ;
And, gone all anguish, gone all toil,
There lies he, soil upon the soil,
With not a trace of vanished life
Save features wrung by pain and strife
Where hate hath glazed in livid gloom
A horror darker than the tomb.

XIII.

When Battle rends, in volleyed thunder,
The thousand doors of death asunder,

And in heaps beneath his fires
Man in bloom and youth expires,
Pale nature weepeth as he bleeds
And doffs her gay attire for weeds.
The mountain stream no more may shew

A crystal current clear,
Its flood is shunned by the panting roe,
And the golden par, in its poisoned flow,
With all that ever had life below

On the tainted banks appear.

The turf, with flowers and verdure bright,
And insect-wings of glittering flight,
Grows dull and dank with crimson stain
Which ne'er was wept, that clammy rain,
From out the founts of purer skies,
Nor e'er from dewy earth could rise.

Man feels a greater change. His frame,
Spoiled of its fine ethereal flame ;
Unstrung those harmonies, which thrill
Life, with a pulse, all music ; still,
And dumb, the shellwork of the lyre,
Gone all its feeling, all its fire,
Remains a cold, unconscious bust

To pay its beauty back to dust.
And how transformed the immortal soul,
When driven upon its earthly goal,
All kind affections flee afar,
Scared by the demon breath of war !
Even that good host, whose pious breast
All hope and faith and peace possessed,
Small sign retain of grace or love
Or hallowed symbol from above.
Black hate hath quenched in every look
 The light of holy zeal ;
The hand which held the sacred Book
 Waves high the gory steel.
Changed, as at night, the glassy lake
 Which sudden blasts are sweeping,
And from the troubled surface shake
 The stars where they were sleeping,
Till heaven hath left thereon no token,
Save radiance marred or image broken !

XIV.

The strife is past : the patriot band
Fell bravely for their native land,

And o'er them burst a ruthless crew
Their wives and children to pursue.
In single combat, drawn aside,
ST CLAIR, the battle's ebbing tide
Saw not, till o'er his foe he stood
Who clasped his knees and mercy sued,
When glancing round, aloof he flung
The captive to the heath who clung
And shrieked, expecting doom. Vain dread,
Already far ST CLAIR hath fled,
Nor paused to save the wretch, or slay,
That pause might MARY's fate betray.
For speed, he doffs his corslet, dyed
With stains in part by foes supplied,
And keenly tracks the soldiers' route
Who urge their chase with many a shout.
Pursuing thus, he can perceive
Two youths abate their pace, and leave
Their comrades ; one a chief appears ;
Their course is bent aside, and nears
A lofty cliff, around whose brow
MARY her cave is seeking now,
With none but MALCOLM by her side,

Sent, ere the combat, as her guide.
Ah, wherefore did she lingering hover,
Watching through the strife her lover,
And gaze, regardless of her fate,
Till fear and flight came all too late ?
With speed renewed the soldiers wind,
Ere long the jutting rock behind,
And when ST CLAIR hath turned the height,
Behold, before his dizzy sight,
MALCOLM resisting in despair,
And MARY all but captive there.
Unmarked, he shouts with frantic cry
To bid the soldiers halt or die.

XV.

They climb a crag abrupt and steep,
Whose middle face in mazy sweep,
 Is scarred by traces which appear
So lightly scooped against the rock
That scarce, without a fatal shock,
 May pass abreast two meeting deer :
So sheer the narrow pathway lies
Above ; below, a precipice.

Across that line old MALCOLM stands
And grasps his sword with desperate hands,
Which seem again with vigour strung,
And life, as when they once were young.
They could have well defended then
That pass against a hundred men.

XVI.

“Yield thee, old man, or die the death !”
The guiding soldier cries ; “thy breath
Yet the saving word may speak,
Now or never, mercy seek !”
“I fear thee not, thou man of blood !”
“Then let the ravens take their food !
Yet shame it were—that thin white hair !
Be wise, old man, and I will spare.”
“Boy ! were each lock—now bleached like snow,
By time, scarce more than care and woe,
A youthful life, to stand or fall
Upon this contest, peril all !”
“Thou foolish dotard ! I have sworn
The maid *shall* from thy grasp be torn.
Back, greybeard, back ! Bar not my path !

Cross not the lightning of my wrath !
Back ! or, I heave thee to the dell
Whence ne'er shall rise thy living yell !
Hark, my chief's impatient cry ;
Silent yield, or babbling die !"
" Soldier, hast thou heard me say
I can perish not betray ?
Yet, even yet, may power divine
Turn thy heart, or succour mine."

XVII.

They strove ; but as their steel is clashing,
And the old man's murder done,
What blaze of death behind is flashing,
Whose, that closely peeling gun ?
While the startled echoes ring
And vultures leave their rocky cover,
Shrieking on the circling wing
As above the dell they hover,
There the chieftain's body lies
Many a gloomy fathom deep,
Still his heart, and sealed his eyes,
In eternal sleep.

Appalled to hear the knelling sound
MALCOLM's murderer gazes round,
And sees, or deems to see, appear
The blood-avenger rushing near,
As ST CLAIR, through volleyed smoke
Which veiled the centre of the rock,
On his blasted eye-balls broke !
High he waves the sabre bare
Whose shine is dim beside the glare
Lightening darkly from his glance
As his winged steps advance.
The soldier's gleaming eye, aghast
Remains an instant ; but 'tis past,
And with a strong and hasty pull
He plucks his blade from the cloven skull,
And, wheeling, watchfully and slow
Advances on his eager foe.

XVIII.

Had neither warrior brooked a wound,
The ruffian might his breast have bound
With three-fold mail ; in vain concealed,
ST CLAIR had cleft him, corpse and shield.

For conscious virtue wins down fire
From heaven, and arms with godlike ire
The awful eye, the lightning thrust
That smites a victim, dust to dust.
But from the strife, that bloody morn,
ST CLAIR is faint, his limbs are worn;
Still, as he climbs the giddy steep,
His right arm hath an open sweep,
His left is covered by the rock,
And dauntlessly he seeks the shock.
Sternly the soldier moves, prepared
With brand advanced to thrust or guard,
But, on the right, his hand is pressed
Too straitly by the mountain-breast.
One spring must close them, hand to hand,
But statue-like, at breathless stand,
Each his foe's defence surveys,
With keen and keenly answered gaze;
Then, gathering up his strength, his blade
ST CLAIR in both hands seized and swayed—
Watch him, wary soldier, now!
Back, from his descending blow!
Close against the cliff recoil,

And his frenzied fury foil !
Weaker thrust on thrust, ST CLAIR
Wreaks the effort of despair,
And the soldier's cautious feet
Safely yield until they meet
MALCOLM's bleeding corpse that lay
Prostrate on the narrow way,
There he staggers on the clay !
Instant as he slips and reels,
 With his open arm apart,
ST CLAIR's insatiate blade he feels
 Gliding through his heart !
Through and through, the life is spilt
Till rings his breast-bone on the hilt !
Back, the murderer is cast,
Till the wet point, through him passed,
On the rock beneath him bend,
 And unspent, the weapon shiver,
As his gushing blood doth blend
 In a warm and purple river
With the slowly ebbing drain
From the old man's scantier vein !

CANTO IV.

THE CONCLUSION.

I.

'Tis summer eve. The yellow sun
The bulwark of the hills hath won,
And, resting on their summits bold,
Crowns the sharp ridge with crusted gold.
O'er half his orb, in glowing shroud,
Is hung the dark-bright billowy cloud,
Evolving, from its masses piled,
Aerial shapes, fantastic, wild,
Which veil or dye his gorgeous blaze
And steep the heavens in mystic haze,
And every pictured charm assume

From light divine to dreamy gloom.
Swift as the breeze-blent scenes arrange
New beauties burst from every change ;
Now charging squadrons sweep the field
When lo, their lines a palace build,
Where column, arch, and dome, and spire,
Frown in dark strength or lurid fire.
But whither fled the halls of air ?
A hoary ruin moulders there
By liquid lakes, of amber wave,
Some islet's fulgent shores that lave ;
Bright shores, where earth her purest dew
Hath wedded to the richest hue,
Cast by the sun-blaze in its flight
Fresh from the fount of living light,
They shine as if their splendent strand
Had yielded stars to form the sand.
When thus, within the setting beam
Glow the far West, such glories gleam
O'er burning mount and cloud the while,
As if the sun's departing smile,
The portals of the inner skies

Could half unfold to mortal eyes,
And in the mellow flush of even
Imbue this conscious globe with heaven.

II.

Now sinking past the hills, the day
Between them streams a lingering ray,
Whose lines prolonged o'er dell and wood,
Glance o'er the green illumined flood,
And kindle in the distance pale
A speck of white, a lonely sail.
That pinnace feels the freshening breeze
At sun-down sweep the surging seas,
And, borne before the rising blast,
Her canvass strains the stooping mast,
Till half the rushing keel is seen
The yawning azure waves between.
Onward and onward, as a cloud
Through sky will drift when winds are loud,
The flying shallop sheers her way
Through murmuring foam and gleamy spray.

III.

A single mariner, whose gaze
A distant rock-bound bay surveys,
The bark directs, which yields again
As managed barb obeys the rein,
And swiftly sways as though it caught,
Intelligent, his rising thought.
Far from the west horizon driven,
Like fragments of a laboring heaven,
Thick, massy clouds commence their flight,
Black as the coursers of the night,
Whose gloomy shade the grey-winged mew
With snowy bosom sailing through,
Shrieks ever and anon her wail
To mingle with the moaning gale.

IV.

It is ST CLAIR whose shallop seeks
The deepest of the rocky creeks,
His bride by night-fall to convey
Beyond the dangers of the bay,
And meet a bark, at morning prime,
To bear them to a foreign clime.

“ An alien clime, where strangers dwell,
My own, my native Land, farewell !
Yet Scotia, how this bosom yearns,
And, outcast, still to thee returns,
As if no force, no wrong, could part
The bond which binds thee round my heart !
Beloved in ruin, must thy name
No more be murmured but with shame ;
Thy children captive, slain, or fled,
All, but the darker than the dead
Who dare to deem, O scorn on scorn,
Life, spoiled of freedom, can be borne.
Then welcome foreign lands to me !
Their climes more kindred if more free,
Though in their crowds, alas, alone,
I move unknowing and unknown ;
Though every eye, where'er I range,
Check me with question cold and strange ;
Though even their language on mine ear
Unkindly chimes, and few shall cheer
My heart with sounds my playmates used,
My friends in converse sweet diffused,
My father taught, my mother sung—

The music of my native tongue !
No more shall they that strain awake,
Then be it silent for their sake !
The slave who carols in his chain
I would not hear the notes profane
Which wont to peal from earth to sky
When burst my brethren's battle-cry :
Let me not mourn the accents lost
Which now resound a tyrant's boast.

“ But I—ah, where the vision flown
Which once through all my day dreams shone ;
My rushing hour of mortal strife,
My triumph o'er the pangs of life,
My grassy couch a hero's grave,
My sleep, companioned by the brave.
O MARY ! thus I could have died,
Glorying, but for a widowed bride.
Then welcome flight ! and though we roam
Far o'er the sea, our stedfast home
With us we bear, while darkest woes
Serve but more brightly to disclose
In thee the ray of woman's faith
Unspent, undimmed, till quenched in death !

Then, though my day should lend no light,
And sleep forsake my couch by night,
And far beyond my father-land
I sue the stranger's niggard hand,
Who hears and spurns the beggar's prayer,
Thou, thou, with smiling love wilt share
The wanderer's want, and woe, and shame,
Fond, fervent, constant, and the same!
And O, whate'er the distant soil,
Whose coast shall know our pilgrim toil,
We'll love to linger by the tide
Which links whate'er its waves divide,
And hear its voice, and hail its foam,
A token from our island-home.
Our wistful gaze the line shall woo
Where blend the heaven's and ocean's blue;
Within that wave, beneath that heaven,
Dear although lost, fallen but forgiven,
Our native land—and though unseen
For sky and ocean meet between,
Yet shall an Exile's warmest sigh
Heave to that vacant sea and sky!
O, shall no Hero yet arise

For rescue, not for sacrifice?
The triumphs of our elder day,
All childless can they pass away,
And leave thee, Albion, lost and low?
Land of a thousand combats,—no!
The cause is deathless! Each red grave
Shall more than render back the brave
In sons whose spirit feels no change
But that their birth-right is revenge!
Such tombs grow altars; and their shrine,
Proscribed, shall still be held divine,
So long as tyrants shall remain
Or even the memory of a chain!
Yes; dawns the day thy yoke which ends,
When guilt is ripe, and doom descends.
When lo, before a People's frown,
A bauble proves the Despot's crown!
A realm reclaims its trust betrayed,
And lo, the Despot's power, a shade!
O when he makes his war array,
Grant me, just Heaven, one dear-bought day,
On equal battle-plain to be
First in the columns of the free,

Mine armed foe mine arms before,
And closing, steel to steel, once more !
For one bright hour like that to shine
I could an age in fetters pine !”

V.

Thus mused ST CLAIR, while o'er the surge
The sweeping blasts his shallop urge :
Thus wept his country, lost, betrayed,
And for a high Avenger prayed,
When o'er his soul, a master charm,
Rebuking sorrow and alarm,
His MARY's faith its magic threw,
And life regained a happier hue.
O faith confiding and sincere !
Dearest and best of good and dear,
In Woman's heart the generous love
Which shocks may rivet, not remove ;
Incapable of selfish thought,
And, for the mourner's solace, taught,
When joy, hope, pride, forsake her mate,
To cling around the Desolate,

Her constant breast his stay to make
Though sky should frown and earth should quake,
And in her fervent clasp bestow
A soothing balm that hallows woe.
O matchless Woman ! vowed in vain
Before an uncelestial fane ;
Thine idol, Man ; thyself divine ;
Thy worship purer than its shrine ;
Thy priceless homage paid at best
By blessing ever more than blest ;
Thy gentle soul in every thrill
Devoted to another's will,
Wherein, undoubting what may fall,
Dost thou, poor gamester ! place thine all,
All on one dye ; and when it fails,
Thy bosom's blight no art avails.
The heart to coldness cast away,
No refuge seeks but in decay.
Self stricken, smote beyond the reach
Of sickly hope, no angry speech,
No murmur stirs *her* silent mood
Whose sole concern is, solitude,

Above her cureless wound to brood,
And, pining for a dreamless rest,
Nurse the deep barb within her breast !

VI.

ST CLAIR and MARY ! shall your star
Light you to peaceful climes afar,
And still upon your union shine
Through youth's career and life's decline,
Or gleams it now with baleful flame
Betokening death or chains and shame ?
One pang at least can ne'er be yours,
The pang which jealous doubt endures.
No ! o'er the land, or through the wave,
In lordly hall, or outlaw's cave,
Or locked within the captive's chain,
Your faith can neither wax nor wane.
Foes watch you now ; inflamed to sate
The double thirst of gain and hate,
For, gold hath been proclaimed the meed
Of him by whom ST CLAIR shall bleed.
Keenly they track each secret path,

And yet, sure refuge from their wrath
Remains, if night shall seal their sleep,
The morn beholds you on the deep.
One little night—yet fortune, fate,
And life, so slender issues wait,
Within that swift revolving tide
Their doom how many may abide !
One fleeting hour may more achieve
Than toilsome ages can retrieve ;
One moment, life's frail link undo,
Which Time can never more renew.

VII.

Lonely, from out her cell which lay
Not distant from the rocky bay,
MARY, who throbs as every breeze
Sweeps rustling through the waving trees,
Pries oft, the oaken boughs between,
Her cavern's rude imperfect screen,
Whene'er the moon, now full and high,
Attains a spot of cloudless sky.
As yet, her glance o'er mount and tree
Where leaf and cliff shine lustrously,

Explores in vain the vacant night
To hail ST CLAIR returned for flight.
No guardian near her, to defend,
Since MALCOLM fell, her faithful friend,
Save one poor servant, leal and true,
And none would mock, his worth who knew,
The trusty hound, whose listening ear
No master's footstep yet can hear.

VIII.

On MARY's heart her lord's farewell
Doth still with lingering sadness dwell,
Yet never shone that pallid face
Informed, inspired, with nobler grace,
Nor ever flashed that pensive eye
A ray of calmer majesty
The lofty spirit to proclaim
Which dangers rouse but cannot tame.
Never till this hour had it soared
So high, so earnestly explored
Itself, or from the quest arose
Less doubtful of its might to close

And cope with fate or fatal strife,
Assured of in-born light and life.
If aught may still, a moment, streak
With transient hue her flushing cheek,
It is when Hope, too busy Hope,
Applies her fairy telescope,
Which brings remotest objects near
Till they within our grasp appear,
And woo the touch they yet decline
For, realms o'erlooked, between us shine ;
When Hope unveils beneath her eye
Too bright a future and too nigh,
Her tutored heart recoils with pain
From view so tempting, yet so vain.
Once more, severely disciplined,
She weighs her native force of mind
With worst of dangers which beset,
And higher towers her daring yet !
Her thoughts, if on this solemn mood
Beguiling Hope again intrude,
To an Almighty Guardian rise,
She kneels to commune with the skies.

IX.

And now she sits, absorbed in soul ;
Lost years, with vivid truth, unroll
Their stores, for Memory's fitful power
An age remeasures in an hour,
And from the tomb, with summons dread,
Evokes awhile the slumbering dead.
Far times revolve before her gaze
Fresh with the tint of other days,
And feelings, deeds, flash on the thought,
Long, long o'er-past, yet unforget.
Her Father, and his fond caress ;
His voice, which ever breathed to bless ;
The lesson of his earliest care,
How passing sweet, her childhood's prayer ;
And as she wakes the holy strain,
Within her soul it seems again
As if her Father, kneeling nigh,
Were murmuring o'er his daughter's cry !
Upon her vision steals, the while,
From out the shade, the softest smile
Which e'er a wo-worn heart beguiled,
A Mother's on her long lost child !

That look which ne'er from infant years
Had chased from MARY's cheek the tears,
Shines on her now, so near and sweet,
She turns, the seraph glance to greet,
And wildered, starts, the reverie gone,
Yet doubtful if indeed alone.
Alone not long to be ! A cloud,
Driven through the gusty sky, its shroud
Abruptly from the moon withdrew,
And as the oak its image threw
Within the cave, far as her seat
And waving all around her feet,
What shade beneath it, black and still,
Fixed her, as if the sight could chill
Her heart to stone ? Dark shape of dread,
The outline of a human head !
Before her breast its pulse regains
And, springing up, her grasp sustains
The poniard which she ever bore,
Three armed men are on the floor,
But pause, as though they feared surprise,
Or shrank, appalled, from sacrifice.
Their group the lower cave bereft

Of lustre, which, above, was left
Pale on her paler brow to stream,
And her large eye's dilated gleam,
And her white lip, and cheek as white,
Whereon the ray was ghastly bright,
And her small hand, high raised, which wound
Wildly the dagger-haft around !
So stern that clasp—on edge and blade
The dazzling moonlight as it played
No quiver, not one throb betrayed !
So motionless each tress of hair,
She seemed a statue of Despair,
Till, from her breast, deep, clear, and slow,
These spirit-thrilling accents flow.
“ If human foes—behold me here
Upborne beyond the touch of fear !
Who first advanceth—dies ! though I,
Beneath your instant vengeance, die.
What seek ye ? I am all alone :
Gaze round the cavern—and begone ! ”
“ Live, Lady ! Captive, live. Our steel
Is meant with sterner foes to deal.

Live then, and hope ! But, for thy lord,
The headsman, or this swifter sword !”
“ If the whole cell ye search in vain—”
“ Fast in his lair we shall remain !
We hold, where'er thy lover roam,
In *thee*, a pledge shall lure him home.”
“ If sooth ye spake, that, in this strife
Ye seek not to assail my life,
Let me draw nigh the porch awhile,
The bracing blast may there beguile
The sudden faintness which my breast,
Outworn with watching, has oppressed.”
“ Enough—unscathed draw nigh ; but hold
Thy fierce-eyed hound must be controlled.
Nay, lovest thou him ? we shall not slay,
But muffle lest his tongue betray.
And thou, beside that porch recline
Until returning strength be thine,
But if thy lover's step be heard
And thou shalt breathe one warning word,
This falchion”—on her neck he laid
Slightly the cold and naked blade !

No accent more his lip expressed,
The look and sign supplied the rest.

X.

Again thick clouds the moon invest,
Whose welcome shadow MARY blessed
While listening, all her soul intent,
Her cheek against the porch is leant
As wan and cold as stone to stone :
All other sense, all thought foregone,
Save one absorbing thirst to seize
And mark each note that loads the breeze,
And through the murmur of the rill,
And every gust which sweeps the hill,
From far ST CLAIR's first step discern,
And, with her life, a dearer earn.
Hark, through them all, the expected sound !
Swift—hope and love in every bound :
They hear him not, but on her ear
His footstep knells distinct and clear—
“ Fly ! HENRY, fly ! the foe are here ! ”
He heard the guardian cry ; unknown,
Her death came with its tenderest tone.

XI.

To bound right onward to the cave,
And share whate'er her fate, or save;
To meet a wound, inflict a death
And trample on the head beneath,
While back the twain surviving foes
Leap swiftly from his desperate close,
To where the cavern yawns more wide,
And, choosing each a several side,
Prepare to stab, behind, before,
Should he beyond the porch explore—
All this, one moment's space achieves.
But why that pause? Or what bereaves
ST CLAIR of fear, although impending
Deadly steel is now descending?
He hath flung himself beside
His love, for him who vainly died,
And clasps her to his breaking heart,
A clasp which Time shall never part!
In death, even as in life, be one
Their union, not to be undone,
Until their couch that morn illumine
Which wakes the sleepers of the tomb.

XII.

Low in the centre of a dell,
On a smooth meadow's gentle swell
Where yet a yew, of sombre green,
Above a moss-grown knoll is seen
To spread its old, incumbent form,
A shield from the descending storm,
There, by the softly gliding wave,
Is laid ST CLAIR and MARY's grave.
Their turf, save when the roebuck goes
To seek the fount, no footstep knows ;
The heath around, no pilgrim views
Save when the bee his toil pursues,
And singing, sips, from bloom to bloom,
The wild-flowers on the Martyrs' tomb.
Beside that burial spot unknown
No hand hath placed a sacred stone,
And yet there sleeps, the mound above,
One relic of devoted love,
Which, mouldered though the wreck appear,
It cost a faithful life to rear.
Yon bleached bones, the tree beneath,
Speak a dumb servant's truth in death,

The Dog, that clung the grave beside,
And couched and moaned him till he died !

NOTES.

CANTO I.

1. *O'erhead they have no canopy
Save the blue arches of the sky, &c.*

“Of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”—*Epistle to the Hebrews*, chap. xi. v. 38.

It is true, indeed, that among the Covenanters, men might be found who chose to affect various eccentricities, a peculiar austerity, and an unusual inspiration: it is also true, that incessant and diabolical persecution, whilst it filled some only with the spirit of martyrdom, naturally breathed into others a keen thirst for revenge. But when we reflect upon the vital importance of the cause which they all in good faith maintained, and with their blood maintained for us, we shall be strange, indeed, if gratitude and admiration do not predominate over every other feeling. The Covenanters do not require the forcible contrast in which they are placed with their persecutors to command this much at least from their country.

2. *Who hears a fainting brother's prayer,
His guilt hath shared, his doom must share, &c.*

One of the Scottish statutes in the first Parliament of James VII., ratifies a royal proclamation of Charles II.,

which, after denouncing "any number of men who convocate in arms, or appear in company in any place, or where any one or two of such as are declared traitors, or fugitives from our laws on treasonable accounts, shall repair," thus proceeds: "And we hereby, of new, intimate to all our subjects, that, whoever shall intercommune with, reset, supply, shelter, or give any comfort to any declared traitors or fugitives, or who shall conceal, reset, or shelter any who do convocate in manner foresaid, that such resetters or assisters shall be proceeded against, as if they were guilty of the crimes whereof these traitors and fugitives are guilty, according to the just rigour of our laws."

3. ———— *where'er they stray,
Famine and bloodshed taint the way.*

A reward was offered for the capture of any one who preached or prayed at a field-meeting or conventicle; and repeated statutes assured all who pursued such persons that they should be indemnified for any slaughter committed in the chase. A monument in the Greyfriars Church-yard at Edinburgh narrates the extermination of nearly 18,000 victims between the periods of the Restoration and the Revolution.

4. *They slew the matron where she stood.*

See Vindication of Scottish Covenanters and Review of Old Mortality, pp. 32, 33.

5. *The greater Christian dares to live.*

"I could die like a Roman, but choose rather to die as a Christian,"—the words of the Marquis of Argyle, one of the first of Scottish martyrs.

CANTO II.

6. *Stuart, from exile raised, caressed,
To stab his country's trusting breast.*

Those who would satisfy themselves that the cruelty, treachery, and despotism of the two recalled Stuarts, as displayed towards Scotland, can receive no embellishment from fiction, may consult the damning records of the Scottish statute-book during their reigns; the Christian Instructor's Review of Old Mortality, &c.; Burnet's History of his own Times; Fox's James II., and Appendix; the dying declarations of the Scottish Martyrs, and the simple but affecting inscriptions on their tombs.

CANTO III.

7. *A rite of danger, for they stake
Their forfeit lives for conscience' sake.*

One of the statutes of James VII. runs thus: "Our Sovereign Lord, considering the obstinacy of the fanatical party, who, notwithstanding all laws formerly made against them, persevere to keep their house and field conventicles, which are the nurseries and rendezvous of rebellion; therefore his Majesty, with consent of his Estates in Parliament, doth statute and ordain, that all such as shall hereafter preach at such fanatical house or field conventicles; as also, such as *shall be present as hearers at field conventicles*, shall be punished by *death* and confiscation of goods."

8. *But they had been bred in the Virgin Land
Of the fearless heart and the fetterless hand, &c.*

Centuries have now elapsed since the Kings of Scotland first inscribed these words round their royal ensigns,

Nobis hæc invicta miserunt
Centum sex proav.

9. *For conscious virtue wins down fire
From heaven.*

When the Count de Belin was taken prisoner by Henri IV. at the commencement of the very unequal battle of Arques, and expressed his surprise at the small number of soldiers with the King, that chivalrous monarch replied, "Vous ne les voyez pas tous; car vous n'y comptez pas Dieu, et le bon droit, qui m'assistent." Henri triumphed.—*Mem. de Sully.*

CANTO IV.

10. *The Dog that clung the grave beside,
And couched and moaned him till he died.*

It is almost unnecessary to quote authority for this. The following is very recent: "Within and around the stockades the ground was strewed with dead and dying, &c. Here and there a faithful dog might be seen, stretched out and moaning over a new made grave, or watching by the side of his still breathing master," &c.—*Snodgrass' Burmese War*, p. 253.

THE MARTYR OF FREEDOM.

F

THE MARTYR OF FREEDOM.

I.

CALEDONIA ! enthroned on the sea-stemming hill !
Till thy cliffs shall decay, and thy fountains grow still,
May the burst of thy banner to heaven unfold
The Lion of crimson, entressured in gold,
With assurance of freedom to hallow the air
O'er the breasts of the Brave and the forms of the Fair !
Thy footstep, O Maid of the lake and the dell,
Does it bound like the deer o'er the heath and the bell ?
With a heart glowing kindly, a voice breathing song,
Thy shield is it bright, and thy spear is it strong,
And the gleam on thy helm doth it dazzle afar
As the sun-beam in peace, and the lightning in war ?
Is thy dwelling still dear, and thy spirit still pure,
Thy worship still holy, thine altar secure ?

Doth Justice assoil, with her equal right arm,
The roof of the cot and the castle from harm,
Invoking the full horn of Plenty to pour
In the midst of thy mountains a generous store?

II.

O best of mercies from above,
Thy people, be they linked in love,
Thy Pastors and their Flocks combined
In bonds which heaven hath blessed and twined?
From many a hearth, the household hearth
Of pious friendship, peace, and worth,
Does incense of sweet sacrifice
At morn and even tide arise;
While Bigotry, with instinct flight
From simple Truth's upspringing light,
Escapeth, cowering, fast and far
As ghost before the morning star?
Whate'er of praise or joy is thine,
Untroubled hearth, unsullied shrine,
Thy Worthies won for thee of old,
With hearts of stern and stubborn mould
All toil to mock, all ill to dare,

Which hate could frame and nature bear,
And hail them welcome, for the cause,
A Christian's faith, a freeman's laws !

III.

Yes, *they* can smile at mortal pain
Whom more than mortal powers sustain.
Though Earth, for them, be warped in night,
Or seen but through a tear,
Heaven on their eye grows yet more bright
And to their heart more near.
Behold the unhallowed tower where lies
The Victim doomed to sacrifice,
On whose deep vault the dawning ray
Through massy bars intrudes the day,
Disclosing, dim within the gloom,
The sure expectant of the tomb.
On yonder board, with straw supplied,
And, all untasted, by his side
A slender crust, and water spread,
In slumber rests his weary head
The Christian Martyr ! honored name
Above the human praise of Fame,

Before the sinking of the sun
His brighter journey shall be done.
See, where he soundly, sweetly sleeps !
Long, grizzled hair, dishevelled, sweeps
In matted folds, his sable vest
Heaving softly with his breast.
One shackled arm his pillow seems,
And yet he smiles amid his dreams !
One arm, across the bosom laid,
His tresses veil with partial shade,
Obscuring not the pale right hand
Which lately swayed a patriot brand,
But o'er whose swelling azure vein
The rack has traced a recent stain.
It gently clasps the sacred Book,
Half-open, where his latest look,
Ere yet the shades of night had closed,
Upon the words of Life reposed.
These blessed words his spirit soothe
With promised love, and light, and truth,
And make him, in his dungeon, free ;
Less calm the Warder rests than he !
And in the hour when fagots blaze,

And foes vindictive round him gaze,
Decaying, limb by wasted limb,
These blessed words shall comfort him !

IV.

Lo, within the marshalled square
Slaves the bloody stake prepare,
With the chain, whose grimy links
Shall clutch the captive when he shrinks.
Around is heaped a circle rude
Of splintered staves and shaven wood
And fagots of the withered pine
Rank with exuding turpentine,
In fatal fragrance which attire
The roofless sepulchre of fire.
Mean objects these ; yet fearful there
From the baleful use they bear :
Storms which rack the skies and seas
Crown Death with terrors less than these.
Densely piled, the fuel stands
High as a man may lift his hands,
And serried, save one narrow cleft
For unreceding footstep left.

Close beneath this lethal porch
Is laid the fat sulphureous torch
Beside a brazier, whence the flame
With lively crackle went and came,
Whilst up the air, in wreathed pyre,
Blue curls of columned smoke aspire.
They slowly rise o'er axe and spear,
Where keeps the stake the halberdier ;
And o'er a mob, where head on head
Thick as the level sands are spread ;
O'er domes, whose crowded tiers of light
Are pale with wonder and affright ;
And roofs, beyond whose dizzy edge
Projects, unstayed, a living ledge,
All eye, all ear, so still that gaze,
They hear the brazier's crackling blaze !

V.

Whence that start ? the passing bell
Hath pierced them with a thrilling knell,
That checks the breath within the throat,
As slow its boding murmurs float
O'er the fixed and tranced array,

Dying mournfully away.
Hark, again, the sound on high,
Like a summons from the sky!
Within the host, whose wounded ear
Quails beneath that note of fear,
Long and vainly may ye seek
Untroubled eye, unblenched cheek,
Or a pulse whose movements go
With a strong and steady flow,
If ye find them not in One
Who walks uncovered and alone.
Behind, the Judges' forms are seen,
And, in the slender space between,
The sable Doomster bides the brunt
Of scowling crowds, with dogged front.

VI.

The Martyr moves, in solemn thought,
Where earth, by whiles, is all forgot,
Absorbed in eloquent, though dumb,
Communion with a world to come.
Its boundless sphere, his spirit's gaze
From life's impending brink surveys,

As, from her cliff, an eagle's glance
The untried ether's blue expanse,
Awaiting, not unawed, the hour
Which first shall prove her conscious power,
Spread her broad wing, uplift her eye,
And own her birthright of the sky.

VII.

The Martyr moves, in musing lost,
His arms upon his bosom crossed,
And shaded back, with decent care,
In flowing folds his grizzled hair,
Whilst ever and anon, his feet
Stain with red drops the flinty street.
His brow is fair, his frame is slight,
And something bent by sorrow's blight,
Yet is there, in the form thus bowed,
A mien so lofty though not proud ;
And, through the languor of that face,
So bright a hope, so meek a grace ;
And, in that clear blue eye, a look,
Where heaven so large a share partook,
The meanest of the hinds who saw

Are lost in pity less than awe.
He feels nor heeds the bended glance
Which meets and follows his advance,
But leads, within the guarded lane
Unto the grave, his funeral train.
Slowly the martyr hath passed along
But stately and kingly through the throng;
Stately and kingly through them all,
He goes to his Master's festival !
The pile is griesly, and doom is near,
But his Master's voice is in his ear,
Even now his soul is full of cheer !

VIII.

Within the deadly pile he stands,
And, turning round, with outspread hands
Forgiveness seemeth to convey
To the poor creature, hired to slay.
Then, to the stake, his back addressed,
He lifts to heaven his palms compressed,
And while his waist the fetters load,
Mutely appeals from man to God !
As from one wounded heart, a moan

Sighed through the crowd with thrilling tone ;
So sighs the forest, when a breeze
In winter sweeps the wailing trees ;
Though low, it hushed beneath its surge
The tolling of the dead bell's dirge !

IX.

The Victim on the altar bound
The clashing fagots clasp around,
But full in front they leave to view,
The bare head and the eyes of blue
Looking bright and gazing through !
With nimble hand and gliding feet
The Doomster's cares the train complete.
Vain of his art (for such are vain !)
His jealous finger proves again
The rivet of the binding chain,
Nor does he blench, though then his ear
A whispered prayer for him may hear,
But, turning, wakes the brazier's glow
And bending o'er, with callous brow,
He marks the central points to scorch,
On high he rears the blazing torch,

Lo, the martyr's race is run !
Lo, the martyr's crown is won !
Gained, at length, the Christian's goal,
Its glories tranquillize his soul !
Through the smoke that warps the pile
Beams his sweet benignant smile,
In perfect peace with all around
Although his judges there be found
Who, troubled, quail to meet his eye
Abashed before its piety,
The fervor of its trust in heaven,
Forgiving thus, to be forgiven.
Ah, who beheld that eye so bright
 Might scarcely deem it of the clay,
So spiritual its holy light
 Within the soul's departing ray !

X.

When high the bursting flames arise,
Fraught with his life-blood, to the skies,
Soaring the martyr's thoughts aspire
Above the bickering Car of Fire,
Upborne beyond the starry dome,

Rejoicing in the view of home.
And hark, a Father's greeting blest
Which hails his weary son to rest !
And hark, the hallelujahs dim
That swell afar to welcome him !
Red though the funeral fagot burns,
To earth no more his sense returns
Save from the tomb, triumphantly,
With lip inspired to sing
" O Grave! where is thy victory ?
O Death! where is thy sting ?"

XI.

So fell the heroes of the faith,
The victors of the grave,
A cry upon departing breath
Their murderers to save.
And oft, alas, the sweeter tongue
Which gentle Woman bears,
Exhaled the martyr's seraph song
Or poured the martyr's prayers.
O which of the sons of sinful clay
Have lived and died as pure as they ?

While a heart may glow or an eye may weep
Be hallowed the soil where their ashes sleep !
What though the low spot where they repose
No marble adorns and no pageant shows ;
Sepulchral trappings, like these, await
The meaner remains of the Vulgar Great,
Who haughtily (dust to dust !) recline
O'erspread with pomp and blazoned design
And the flattering gloss of the sculptor's line—
The martyr's grave is a holier shrine !
In silent wild, or murmuring glen,
Be his a tomb apart from men,
A tomb unframed by human hand
The bosom of his Father-Land !
No meaner thing approach the grave,
Where high his country's thistles wave
And nature's crimson coronet rear
Above its pomp of prickly spear,
Than sweet, the carol of the bird
Aloft in azure ether heard,
Or tiny streamlet's lulling sound
That pours a plaintive note around,
Or the grey moss which Time bestrews

Above a hundred years' repose,
Or hushed, the pious Pilgrim's tread
Beside the relics of the Dead
Whose sacred gloom his soul inspires
With loftier hopes and nobler fires,
And with new faith imbues his mind
In heaven, his country, and mankind,
Till, as his heart their fate recalls,
On him the martyr's mantle falls !

XII.

If then he feel one hallowed trust
Confided to a child of dust,
More sweet than life, more pure than love,
The impress from a hand above
Which shews, while unerased the sign,
An Author, and a Work divine,
It is, to guard the Soul as free
As first it sprang, O God, from Thee !
Who truly lives, or bravely dies
In this great cause a sacrifice,
Hath yielded in the path he trod
Blessing to man, homage to God !

Vain, the dull shackles that would bind
The curbless energies of Mind,
Instinct of heaven, with kindred glow,
To search, divide, reflect and know ;
Blest, still to learn and still inquire
With thirst unslaked, unpalled desire ;
Whose food is thought, whose health is truth,
Whose destiny, immortal youth ;
Whose sun-like power, with sleepless gaze,
An unhorizoned sky surveys,
And with her in-born light hath filled
The worlds her beams create or gild !
Whose ardour still upward and homeward burns
With a flame, fanned by rising, which never returns !
Whose arrowy impulse hies onward for ever,
Launched, aimed and arrayed from no time-tainted quiver ;
Whose boundless quest, and whose weariless flight
Form glorious existence and pure delight,
Though the goal be ungained, and the mark be unseen,
For the depth of Eternity lieth between !

XIII.

And shall a mortal's guile confine
This Power, of source and scope divine?
No, by its Martyrs! One great Hand
Yon bright orb, and this spirit planned,
And who their lightest law would bend
His Maker's glory must transcend!
No! Though man's cunning prism divorce
Some sunbeams from their native course,
Can his device or stint or stay
The boundless bounties of the Day?
And though some souls, the spiritual rays
Effulgent from a central blaze,
His guilty fraud or fetters mar,
The Mind-burst mocks his puny bar!

XIV.

Behold the mightiest earthly scene,
Cerulean field of rolling Ocean,
Beside the Mind, its depths how mean,
Its power, its stores, its wild commotion!
The mantle of the seas unrolled
One world, and one alone can hold;

The heaven, upon its purest waves,
A slight and shadowy trace engraves,
Nor unto them the grasp is given
To image aught beyond that heaven ;
By rocks impent, begirt with sand,
The Ocean fiercely chafes the land,
But free from bonds shall never flow,
Quelled by the frail and filmy Bow.
From day to day, from age to age,
In sleeping calm or stormy rage,
The same remain its various moods
As when the infant globe its floods
Encircled first, and shall abide
The same unchanging restless tide,
Without advancement, till the doom
Which blasts it with a burning tomb.
But Mind, which earth and air surveys,
And every planet scans and weighs
Through all their harmonies of flight
Or place, or time, or form, or light,
Such view, a stinted vision feels,
Which less discovers than conceals,
Provokes a might it cannot tire,

And feeds, not satisfies, her fire.
Not, though within her system move
 The Passions on their courses hurled,
Wonder, and Hate, and Fear, and Love,
 Each in itself a teeming world,
Do these her baseless deeps fulfil
But leave unmeasured regions still :
And, though expanding to embrace
All meted or imagined space,
Within she bears a universe
More vast than outward realms diverse,
Surpassing all, or real or feigned,
As the container the contained.
Yes, he who would *himself* explore,
Finds an abyss still yawn before,
And plumbs, with unreturning line,
The gulf of an unfathomed mine.
Mysterious Power ! Clad for a day
In fairest pomp of fervent clay
Whose mortal wreck a wing supplies
Strong to sustain it to the skies.
Though some, unblest, esteem it ends
When to the tomb the dust descends,

Expiring, like a subtle flame,
The substance spent from which it came ;
There are, against whose mailed breast
Such doubt as feebly is addressed,
As sun-burst at a steely crest,
Which, bright by flinging back the beam,
Returns to air the air-brought theme.
From o'er the grave, that goal of earth
But cradle of a second birth,
Who, that can love, or muse, or mourn,
But feels a pledge and presage borne,
Unworldly, yet the spirit's guest,
Like midnight star in Ocean's breast,
The spotless symbol, sure though slight,
Of realms of far celestial light,
Where doubts no more the clime defile,
Sunned by its Maker's certain smile,
And ties, which here too swiftly sever,
Shall fondly be re-blent for ever ?
When Time's last golden sand is sped
And our corporeal film is shed,
Shall not our all-pervading thought
Combine relations most remote,

And what, in life, disjoined appears
By chasms of climate, kind, or years,
Perceive through closest links allied,
And Providence to Fate applied
By tracing her unvarying laws
From each effect to every cause?
Between yon acorn's puny size,
And the huge oak by which it lies,
Whose might hath age and storm withstood
While thrice mankind have been renewed,
What kindred essence can our eye,
More than in leaf and stem descry?
Yet ere three ages fill again
The cradles and the graves of men,
While wastes the leaf upon the mould,
The acorn in its breast shall fold
All elements, from myriad spheres,
Brought for its growth through distant years,
Already destined to its rise
By force as fixed as props the skies.
Fire, air, and water, earth and sun,
Form, order, beauty, strength, in one
Collected shall our heirs behold

When Nature's powers yon seed unfold.
Unseen by us, the links that yoke
The acorn to the future oak ;
Unfelt, the chain of fine relation
Which allies them with creation ;
Yet, when unscaled, our glance may pierce,
Electrical, the universe,
And view, through concords now obscure,
Even in the seed the tree mature ;
Resolve the tree, at ripest term,
Back to the spheres and to its germ ;
And following an unbroken clue,
Atom or compound's track pursue,
Retraced high as their natal prime
Or presaged to the close of time,
And lo ! each part, from pole to pole,
Full, perfect, proper, as the whole.

Then, too, the moral world surveyed
Shall slough its partial light and shade ;
When hearts we bare unto the core,
And states from rise to fall explore,
Deeds and rewards exposed remain
The antidote beside the bane,

Their secret bond at once annealed,
And, in the seed, the tree revealed.

But loftier yet, the lot assigned
To educate the deathless Mind,
Upraised, where, in empyrean plain,
Extremes receding meet again :
Where every seeming opposite
Shall, in discovered truth, unite,
And their deep sympathies make known
Which all the choir of Nature tone,
Though now absorbed and lost they lie
As in the ray the seven-fold dye,
Hid by mere brightness from our gaze,
Which light or dark extreme betrays.
Then growth and wasting, ebb and flow,
Order and chaos, weal and wo,
Weakness and strength, and peace and strife,
Virtue and vice, and death and life,
These themes, though farther cleft asunder
Than central sky from ocean under,
Approached, combined, and understood,
Shall shine co-ministers of good,
And less constrain the spirit's scope

Than all the stars yon azure cope.
These themes, though high their limits tend,
Form but the means and not the end ;
The vail of a mysterious shrine
Dividing human from divine ;
The scale, upsoaring past the skies
Although the earth its base supplies,
Through whose degrees the angels wending
Rising ever or descending,
Equal wisdom understand
Sustain the stars or strew the sand.
That scale, more steep than sun to sun,
Near and more near its zenith won,
Shall raise the Spirit's view *before*,
And imp her waxing wing the more,
Till aught, in distance dim, remote,
Seeming, but now, the poles of thought,
Grow central to the vaster sphere
Engrossed by her enlarged career,
Where all progression forms the base,
The vantage-ground, from which to trace,
And learn, and love the Almighty Soul
Who framed, informed, and sways the whole !

XV.

Boundless the spirit's sphere sublime,
And O as boundless is their crime,
Who crush her nascent powers, or pen
Her pinion in their narrow den,
Remorseless, though the priceless gem
They bury, yields no light to them,
So that, rude, dark, unknown, it lies
Unconscious of its sacrifice.
And oft succeeds their baleful care,
To maim more skilled than to repair.
The acorn, whence an oak might shoot,
Will perish, trampled by the brute :
The eye, which God alone can light,
A trailing worm may warp and blight ;
And thus, too oft, the human breast,
That temple when by knowledge blest,
Truth's temple and her sunny throne,
Before some Idol, stock or stone,
In ignorance entrapped, profaned,
Lies darkly quenched or sternly chained.
Yet fraught with spark divine, which still
Keeps smouldering indestructible,

And through all night, the night denying,
And through all bonds, for freedom sighing.
Wo worth the cruel snares inwove
To thrall the monarch-bird of Jove,
Who, free, all meaner flight would shun,
To sport, companion of the sun,
Float o'er aerial heights unknown,
Where'er his pinion there his throne,
Watch the far clouds beneath him form,
Stoop on the breeze or fan the storm,
Grasp the bright thunder, yet unhurled,
And soar serene above the world !
But if the tyrant cage confines
His range, the strong-eyed eagle pines,
Mourns the proud beauty of his wing
That mocks his prison's narrow ring,
And, ruffled by the passing gale,
Yearns up yon azure deep to sail
Where sweetly glitter, through the bar,
In vain for him, the sun or star !
Untaught the native longings crave,
Which spring to curse the shackled slave
Who droops, heart-broken, to receive

The garbage which his gaolers leave,
Or furiously for freedom strains,
Until the life-blood bathe his chains.

XVI.

There is, that mounts with swifter fire
Than even an eagle's plumes aspire ;
There is, to which a wider heaven
And brighter, is of birthright given ;
Almighty Power ! the crime arrest
At the Soul's heritage addressed,
Which, round her infant cradle, coils
With prescient hate, the bigot toils,
Whose captive can unfold no more
Its primal bent and spring to soar ;
Lost, as the sick, untinted flower,
Denied the sun and dewy shower ;
Or fountain sealed, whose sparkling rise
Should glad the earth and greet the skies.

XVII.

Their bondless birthright to secure,
A right-hand free, and a conscience pure,

And a hearth that was Liberty's citadel,
Our fathers fought, and our fathers fell :
Alas, how oft their blood did lave
The land which it was blest to save !
For this same cause, should foes arise,
There still survive who dearly prize
Their sires' renown, their sons' repose ;
In whose true hearts the life-blood flows,
Which yet should earn in Albion's need
The Saviour's or the Martyr's meed.
But O may white-winged Peace assure
Their lives, in happiness obscure !
May thousands sleep in graves unknown,
Who could die to do what their sires have done !
Yet, Traitors ! forget not in calmer days,
How the pulse will throb and the bosom blaze
With fire which earth cannot restrain
By scaffold, or scourge, or wasting chain,
Or Tyrant's rage, or minion's scorn,
When the suffering for the Truth is borne.
And each red drop, each sacred tear,
Hath made a Country's cause more dear

L

And the spirit of Man is sternly steeled
To pine in the dungeon or bleed in the field,
But to swerve *never*, and never to yield !

NOTES.

1. *But o'er whose swelling, azure vein,
The rack has left a recent stain.*

The abuse of the torture under JAMES VII. was one of the violations of the laws and liberties of the kingdom, specifically complained of in the Claim of Right made by the Estates of Scotland at the Revolution, in tendering a constitutional crown to the acceptance of WILLIAM and his Consort. It is just, however, to add, that the torture was not a novelty introduced by JAMES VII. into Scotland; "It lay in his way and he found it," as FALSTAFF says of rebellion; and having found it, he pushed it to a revolting excess.

2. *Slaves the bloody stake prepare.*

It is perhaps scarcely necessary to explain, that the martyrdom by fire is not given as a specimen of the mode of execution commonly employed against the Covenanters; but because it has been generally practised by bigotry and priestcraft as the most approved method of refuting heterodoxy, or suppressing freedom of thought. The fiery torture would appear, however, to have been occasionally used even at this period, from the following passages in a Discourse by the Rev. W. SYMINGTON of Stranraer, published in 1831, and entitled, "The Character and Claims of the Scottish Martyrs."—"How shall we speak of their tortures? They were tormented in every possible form.

But the horrors of the thumbkin, the boot, the wheel, the rack, and the fagot, are not for recital here." "By shooting, hanging, quartering, beheading, burning, were these cold-blooded murders perpetrated."—See pp. 17, 18.

3. *Or a pulse whose movements go
With a strong and steady flow.*

When the Marquis of ARGYLL was on the scaffold, and about to suffer death, BURNET says :—"CUNNINGHAM, his physician, told me he touched his pulse, and it did then beat at the usual rate, calm and strong."—*Burnet's Hist. of his own Times*, i. 179.

4. *Save from the tomb triumphantly,
With voice inspired to sing,
"O Grave, where is thy victory,
"O Death, where is thy sting?"*

A priest and two sisters, convicted of heresy, were burnt at the stake in Spain. "The priest was gagged till the moment of lighting up the wood. The few minutes that he was allowed to speak, he employed in comforting his sisters, with whom he sung the 109th Psalm, till the flames smothered their voices."—*Quarterly Review*. *Quin's Visit to Spain*.

5. *Through whose degrees the angels wending,
Rising ever or descending—*

"And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it."—*Jacob's Vision*. *Genesis*, c. xxviii. ver. 12.

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